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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY East Germany

SUBJECT Power Groups within the SED Politburo

REPORT

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Contrary to the facade of unanimity which the SED Politburo presents to the East German population, there are often violent arguments and disagreements at the Politburo meetings. These inner tensions have gradually led to the formation of unofficial power blocs within the body. Employees of the Politburo talk in terms of three "Groups"[1] which they identify as follows: 25X1

a. The Ulbricht Group. Leader of this group is Walter Ulbricht, 1st Secretary of the SED. Additional members are Karl Schirdewan, Willi Stoph, Erich Mueckenberger and Gerhard Ziller.

b. The Grotewohl Group. This Group generally finds itself in opposition to the proposals and plans of the Ulbricht Group. Its leader is Otto Grotewohl but it finds its strongest support from the side of Wilhelm Pieck. In addition to Grotewohl and Pieck the following Politburo functionaries are considered members of this group: Paul Wandel, Hermann Matern, Friedrich Ebert and Heinrich Rau.

c. The Informer Group. The third group is called the Informer Group by the Politburo employees because the individuals considered members of the group do not ally themselves firmly with either of the two main groups. They utilize their influence and weight by playing both of the main groups against each other, hoping to benefit from their rivalry. The members of the third group are considered to be: Fred Oelssner, Alfred Neumann, Bruno Leuschner and Erich Honecker.[2]

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